

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Rwanda Schools to be Powered by Solar Panels**

***Rwanda Education Board and USAID distribute more than 1000 panels***

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Government schools across the country have received solar panels to facilitate the use of cell phones, speakers, netbook computers, and projectors, as part of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Literacy, Language, and Learning (L3) Initiative, implemented by Education Development Center. The distribution, which concluded in September, provided 1,139 schools with solar panels, ensuring that all public primary schools have electricity.

The Rwanda Education Board (REB) with the support of USAID's L3 Initiative has developed a comprehensive package of print and audio materials for P1 and P2 Kinyarwanda, English, and mathematics, which is now in use at more than 2,600 schools nationwide. As part of this program, more than 12,000 loudspeakers and cell phones, loaded with audio lessons were distributed.

Audio lessons guide the teacher and students through effective interactive lessons, using songs, games, and chants. The audio introduces new techniques proven to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills, and also provides both teachers and students the opportunity to listen to fluent English speakers with clear pronunciation. Access to a reliable source of electricity is essential for schools being able to charge and use the cellphones and speakers for the audio lessons.

"We're very excited to have the solar panels up and running at primary schools throughout the country," said Peter Malnak, USAID/Rwanda Mission Director. "They will be a source of power for the new audio lessons as well as the young minds that will use them. It is technology like this that is helping to prepare Rwanda's young people to be a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce."

In addition to cell phones and speakers, the solar panels will also power the use of netbook computers and projectors. As part of REB's School-based Mentoring Program, 1,000 mentors deployed across the country use projectors and netbook computers, loaded with video-based resource packages, to train teachers in using the new L3 instructional materials and methods.

"We are committed to leveraging technology in innovative ways to support education and ultimately development in Rwanda," said REB Director General Dr. John Rutayisire.

According to Dr. Rutayisire, the provision of solar panels will harmonize REB's effort to provide equal access to innovative technology, enabling more schools to benefit from initiatives like One Laptop per Child. The impact will also extend beyond the classroom. "This initiative is not only lighting up the school, but lighting up the whole community," he said. "Schools with solar panels

will become centers of community development and learning, changing the lives of those communities."

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**The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** *is the foreign assistance agency of the United States Government. USAID supports \$150 million of development assistance annually to Rwanda, with programs in health, economic development, education, and democracy and governance. Learn more: [www.usaid.gov/rwanda](http://www.usaid.gov/rwanda)*

**The Rwanda Education Board (REB)** is the Government institution in charge of all activities which can fast track education development in Rwanda.

**Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)** is a global nonprofit organization that addresses urgent challenges in education, health, and economic development. EDC manages 250 projects in 30 countries. Visit [edc.org](http://edc.org).